

amp.  
Eccel. Pol.  
A

//

AN

# ESSAY

ON

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

BY

A LAYMAN OF THE CHURCH

IN  
SCOTLAND.

[John Alexander]

1882/11/10

"I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church."—NICENE CREED.

324554  
17. 2. 36

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY THOMAS STEPHEN;

LEWIS SMITH, ABERDEEN; SMITH, ELDER, & CO. AND J. MORTIMER,  
LONDON; AND J. ROBERTSON & CO. DUBLIN.

1835.

*Price Sixpence.*



## PREFACE.

---

PERHAPS it is unnecessary to state, that the sole object for which the following pages have been written and published, is to convince their readers that Episcopacy is of Divine institution. Whether the author has been successful in his argument, he will leave others to decide. He will take this opportunity of addressing a few remarks to those, who, believing Episcopacy to have existed universally throughout the whole Christian world, from the time of the Apostles till the time of Calvin, yet nevertheless do resist the same, for reasons which it is somewhat difficult to state, and certainly much more difficult to appreciate. The sum and substance of their ideas, however, generally amount to this, that Church Government is a mere matter of form, and that people may, without any impropriety, adopt that system with which their fancy may be best satisfied, or which may have the advantage of being sanctioned and established by the Government under which they live. Such being the case, it may be worth while to shew that such a conclusion is perfectly unwarranted by any thing to be found either in reason or in revelation.

In the first place, then, it may be remarked, that nothing is more clearly established by reason than the principle, that a house divided against itself cannot stand. This principle applies not only to a house, but to every thing which is composed of parts, such as an army, a nation, &c. Could the operations of an army be conducted to any advantage against the foe, where a unity of purpose and command was wanting, and where every man assumed authority at his pleasure? Would not order thus be displaced by confusion, and certain defeat be the consequence of discordant counsel?—Again, can we imagine a nation peaceful and happy, in which several actual or virtual governments exist, all at variance with each other? Would there in such a case be any security for either life or property? Would not the sword of the plunderer become the statute law of the realm? Would not the nation itself, torn asunder by dissensions at home, lose all its possessions abroad, and become an easy prey

to the first invader? Would not peace and tranquillity be banished from the people, and anarchy rule triumphant over the land? The bare mention of such things is sufficient to enable each individual to draw a proper conclusion. And is there any reason why this principle, so universally applicable to all the objects of experience and practice, should not be held equally applicable to the church militant on earth? Has she no enemies to overthrow, no difficulties to obviate, no obstacles to overcome? If she has, why should the Christian world not endeavour by every proper means to unite once more in apostolic doctrine and fellowship, and to keep inviolate that faith which was once delivered to the saints? Then indeed might the true energies of the Church be exhibited; then might human error, clothed in all the varieties of oriental colouring, be successfully assailed; then might the time arrive when vice, as the only heresy, would be ashamed to hold up its diminished head. How, on the other hand, can it be expected that the voice of Christianity should be all-powerful, when the government of the Christian community is assumed by a motley group of persons, all claiming a right to the pastoral office, and each using his pastoral staff, not in leading his sheep to the true pastures, but in attempting to break his neighbour's head? How can meekness and gentleness be preached from pulpits which are raised for the gratification of intellectual and spiritual pride? How can peace and sobriety be recommended in churches whose very existence was first occasioned by strife and contention? What wisdom can be expected to descend from those doctors' chairs, which appear to have been erected, not for the propagation of truth, but for the spreading of contradiction?

That this principle of unity, which is so strongly recommended by reason and experience, is as strongly recommended by revelation, is indeed very obvious. Our blessed Saviour thus addressed his heavenly Father: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*"\* The following passages of holy Scripture are also sufficiently expressive. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."† "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." "Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts; *these be they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit.*"‡ "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the

\* St John xvii. 20, 21.

† Romans xvi. 17.

‡ Jude, verse 3, 17, &c.



members of that one body, being many, are one body, so is Christ ;” “ now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”\* “ Is Christ divided ?”† “ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”‡ “ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction ; and many shall follow their pernicious ways ; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”|| “ Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”§ Having seen, then, that the principle of unity is recommended by reason in secular societies, and is not only recommended but enjoined by revelation in the Christian society, it necessarily follows, that to ensure such unity, the existence of government and authority must be recognised in the Church ; and the only question which remains is this,—in whose hands does that government lawfully reside ? We are informed in the passages of Scripture just quoted, that we must mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the apostolic doctrine and fellowship ; we are warned that in the latter times there will be mockers who shall walk after their own ungodly lusts ; and that these individuals will shew what spirit they are of, by the separations which they will occasion ; we are also warned that the time will come, when the people will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and that these teachers will even privily bring in damnable heresies ; and to conclude, we are also informed, that even in the Apostles’ times there were some who claimed the title of apostles, but who were found liars. Is there nothing to be learned from all this ? Must we not, as faithful servants of our blessed Saviour, endeavour by every means in our power to discover his duly commissioned ministers, and mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences, lest we be guilty of those damnable heresies, and be finally lost ; because, when we had found the ark of the living God, we would not enter it, but preferred arks made with our own hands, which could not weather the storm, in consequence of being made in direct opposition to God’s authority ? Can we ever forget the strong and emphatic language of our Saviour, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, BUT CLIMBETH UP SOME OTHER WAY, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep,”—St John x, 1, 2. And can we ever forget the strong language of St Jude, when, writing

\* 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27.

† Ib. i. 13.

‡ 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

|| 2 Peter ii. 1, 2.

§ Rev. ii. 2.

about those who had usurped authority without being duly called, despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities, he says, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." \* After such fearful denunciations, ought we not to be wary as to those whom we admit to be our spiritual guides—to see that they have entered by the door into the sheep-fold, and that they have not climbed up another way,—a way which God never appointed and never recognized? Is it not manifest, that if they have not entered in by the door, they must necessarily be thieves and robbers, and may finally perish in the gainsaying of Core, with the whole of their followers?

So far as we have yet gone, we have seen that, according both to reason and revelation, Church government must be something more than a mere form. We may now pursue this argument, and maintain farther, that without an apostolic ministry, deriving their commission by succession from the Apostles, there can be no such thing as a Church at all. Whatever some people may think of this position, however illiberal they may call it, and whatever bigotry they may attribute to its supporters, nothing is more obvious and more easily proved. Some there are, who, after having given considerable attention to the subject of Episcopacy, and after having convinced themselves that it possesses an apostolic origin, do still, notwithstanding, refuse to acknowledge it in practice, upon the ground of its being merely a form, which may be changed, as they think, to suit certain circumstances of the Church. Now, nothing is more certain, than that these people completely misunderstand where the essence of the Episcopal argument lies; for if they did not, they would see that it is not merely a matter of form, but a matter of authority and order. The question is not, whether diocesan Episcopacy or parochial Episcopacy is most primitive, but whether the powers of ordination and mission do not exclusively belong to an order of ministers in the Episcopal Church, at first called apostles, or angels of the churches, and now called bishops. It is here that the whole controversy hinges; it is here that the battle has to be fought, and the apostolical authority of the Church vindicated. If these people, then, who maintain that Church government is a mere form, should call upon us to shew, that without an apostolic ministry, deriving their commission by succession from the Apostles, there can be no such thing as a Church; this is our answer, that individuals usurping authority in the Church, without possessing such a commission, are not, in any sense, shepherds of Christ's flock, but are styled in holy Scripture thieves and robbers; that to them our Saviour never gave authority to administer the sacraments of baptism and the holy eucharist;

\* Jude, verse 11.

that through the laying on of their "sensual" hands, a curse instead of a blessing may descend ; that through their preaching many may be turned to the most damnable heresies. To illustrate this argument by analogy, let it be supposed that a person wishes to become a partner of a joint stock company, what does he do ? Why, he reads a copy of those regulations by which the affairs of the Company are conducted, and he discovers in those regulations that his application to become a partner must be addressed to the Secretary, (the method of whose appointment is also therein settled), having previously procured recommendations from two individuals who are already partners. Having discovered this, he does not hesitate to comply with the terms above set forth, but procures recommendations, draws up his application, and addresses it to the Secretary, which being brought under the notice of a meeting of the Company, he is duly admitted a partner himself. He never for a moment imagines, that, in opposition to the regulations, it is unnecessary for him to procure recommendations, or that he may address his application to any member of the Company, whether he be Secretary or not ; because he knows full well, that in order to procure admission, the recommendations must be procured, and the application addressed to the Secretary, the only individual whom the Company authorises to entertain such applications ; nor would the man's conduct, if he happened to be perfectly sane, be in the slightest degree altered by the circumstance, that a few members of the Company should come to him privately, and, without pretending to produce any authority, should assure him, in opposition to the regulations, that they could make him a partner, without any recommendations on the one hand, or the intervention of the Secretary, and a meeting of the Company, on the other. It would not satisfy his mind to tell him, that these things were mere forms ; for the bare idea of such a thing is perfectly ludicrous. How then would this man act, supposing him to be a converted heathen, and free from sectarian prejudices, if he wished to become a member of the Christian society ? Why, he would just do what he did before. He would peruse the New Testament, which contains the regulations by which the Christian society is governed, and he would discover therein, that in order to become a Christian, he must be baptized into the faith of Christ, and that baptism can only be administered by a particular body of men, deriving their ministerial functions from the divine Saviour of the world ; that that divine person committed those functions to the eleven Apostles, and to those whom they should duly appoint to succeed them in the government of the Church, even to the end of the world ; and after studying the Episcopal argument, he would conclude, that none but bishops, (who are the successors of the Apostles,) and presbyters and deacons ordained by such bishops, have any right to exercise



such a power. Having discovered this, he would lose no time in seeking baptism from some bishop, presbyter, or deacon, and would never imagine, for a moment, that any person, whose pretended commission flowed from a different source, could enrol him as a member of the Christian society; nor would his ideas upon the subject be changed by the circumstance, that he was told that Church government is a mere form, and that baptism may be administered by any person calling himself a minister, whether he derives his commission from the Apostles or not. Unless they could shew such a commission, he would reject their baptism, because it is not baptism; he would not acknowledge their ministry, because, as a priesthood, they do not possess a divine commission.

The remarks which have been now made in reference to baptism, are equally applicable to the apostolic rite of Confirmation, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and to the exercise of all the other duties of the ministerial office; from the whole of which any one may conclude, that without an apostolic ministry, there is no church where the sacraments and other means of grace can be properly dispensed to the people for whom Christ died, and for the advantage of whom he instituted those means of obtaining everlasting life. Such being the case, then, it is a matter of great importance to the laity, that they should be able to recognise, among the various pretenders to the office of the holy ministry, those who really possess a Divine commission, as we have seen that "no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee."\* And as the importance of this matter is very great, so is the method abundantly simple. Before any person is entitled to assume the ministerial office, he must, as has been already remarked, possess a Divine commission to do so. If he can vouch the truth of his commission by the performance of a miracle, all tongues must necessarily be stopped, and his ministry held to be proved. But if he cannot do this, he has yet another way, and only another,—and that is, by showing that he has received authority from those possessing authority themselves, and capable of granting it to others. Now it may be stated as an incontrovertible fact, that none of the Protestant communities can validly claim this right by succession except the Protestant Episcopal Church. At the time of the Reformation, certain duly consecrated Bishops threw off the Papal yoke, and asserted the fulness of their own apostolical character, by the reformation of the churches over which they presided; and it is through these men that the present clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church derive their commission, and thus validly claim a succession to the Apostles through the Romish

\* Heb. v. 4, 5.



Church, which, however gross her errors in doctrine have been, always preserved the fellowship of the Apostles. But the case is very different with all sectarian or non-Episcopal Protestants, for, in protesting against the Church of Rome, they protested also against the Church of God; in endeavouring to maintain apostolic doctrine, they dispensed with apostolic fellowship; in despising Episcopal ordination, they ignorantly unchurched themselves altogether. To illustrate this argument by analogy, let us suppose that some elders in the Scottish Ecclesiastical Establishment maintained at the present day, that they had a right not only to perform that which had been committed to their care at their ordination, but also to ordain their own successors; and let us suppose further, that they denounced as a nuisance the very order of ministers from whom they derived their commission,—what would these ministers do? Would they not say to those rebellious elders, How can ye pretend to despise, and attempt to set aside the authority of those from whom ye have derived the only power which ye possess? We gave you no power to appoint your own successors in the eldership; among the various duties which we committed to your care, we did not mention the laying on of hands; so that it is ridiculous for you to assume such a power, the exercise of which only exposes your folly, since you have usurped it without any authority whatever; and no term of prescription can ever give a Divine sanction to your proceedings, or to the proceedings of those to whom you may pretend to communicate your usurped authority. This short argument is excessively simple, and is easily applied to another case. The sectarian or non-Episcopal ministers, are, as it was before implied, the representatives of certain laymen and presbyters, who at the time of the Reformation, and at subsequent times, pretended to have the power of ordaining ministers of the Gospel,—no such power having ever been communicated to them, and their ministerial functions having been usurped by them without any Divine authority. Such being the case, is it not clear that the ordinations held by them were perfectly invalid, and that the ordinations of their representatives are equally so? Where is the difference between this case and the supposed case of the rebellious elders in the present day? There is no difference; the cases are exactly similar; for it is an indisputable fact, that the Presbyterian or sectarian Reformation in this country was accomplished by rebellious elders in the sixteenth century.

Before concluding these prefatory remarks, it may be as well to prevent the possibility of any mistake being made with respect to the feelings entertained by the Protestant Episcopal Church towards the members of the Presbyterian Establishment, by stating the position which she considers them to hold in the Christian kingdom. Deeply, indeed, does she regret the necessity of denying the existence of an apostolic ministry in the Ecclesiastical

Establishment of the country, and with feelings of the deepest sorrow is she afraid, that the sacraments of life are consequently administered by unauthorised hands; but notwithstanding all this, she humbly trusts that such a departure from the apostolical fellowship of the Church is not of a wilful character, either among the clergy or the laity. She would fondly cherish the idea, that as the Divine Saviour of the world is their acknowledged Head, he will impute to their ignorance their disregard of his duly commissioned ministers. But although God, in his infinite mercy, may not strike those who err from ignorance, the case is quite different with those whose knowledge is of a higher order. They must act up to the light which they possess. They must not shut their eyes against the truth; and after they have received it, they must regulate their conduct by it. Let us, in conclusion, then, trust, that the day is not far off, when the whole nation will be united, not in apostolical doctrine alone, but in apostolical fellowship also;—let us continually pray to our Almighty Father for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to produce that unity which our blessed Saviour said would induce the world to believe in his Divine mission;—let us, in the language of the English liturgy, pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church; that it may be so guided and governed by his good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

EDINBURGH, *12th May 1835.*

## AN ESSAY, &c.

---

IN these days of false liberality and indifference, when the Church of God is desolated and laid waste by the inventions of men, it is not to be wondered at, that a difference of opinion should exist upon the subject of Episcopacy. The obstinacy and ignorance which have been displayed by Protestant sectarians upon this subject, for nearly the last three centuries, are a demonstrative proof of the fearful extent to which people may become the victims of delusion, when they have once abandoned all sober appeals to the word of God, and given themselves over to their own imaginations. The various assaults which they have made from time to time upon the Protestant Episcopal Church, only serve to record the various discomfitures which they have sustained ; and having been totally vanquished in every previous attempt to overthrow that apostolical institution in England, they are now reduced to the last struggle, and content themselves with inveighing against it, on the ground of its being a legal establishment. The several opponents of Episcopacy, being now conscious that their own respective systems of polity have no valid claims to an apostolic origin, have virtually consented to abandon the ground on which they *once* trod with so much confidence, and have been most assiduous in endeavouring to infuse into the minds of the vulgar a false species of charity, which confounds all differences of opinion, and encourages an idea that we are entitled, as Christians, to become the advocates of that particular polity, which happens to be most agreeable to our respective theories of government. Now, although we are willing to allow that all things are pure to him who is himself pure, we cannot help maintaining, that that individual cannot be pure, who ventures to look with an eye of indifference upon any apostolic institution, such as we shall prove Episcopacy to be.\*

The real question for the consideration of every Christian is this,—Did Christ and his Apostles institute any particular system of Church government? If they did, we are as much bound to respect and uphold that particular institution as any other institution contained in the New Testament ; for we are not entitled to frame a new Church government

\* Epistle of St Ignatius to the Trallians. “ He that is within the altar is pure ; but he that is without, that is, does any thing without the Bishop, and Presbyters, and Deacons, is not pure in his conscience.”



for ourselves, any more than we are entitled to frame a new set of commandments, at variance with those which we have received from our blessed Saviour and his divinely inspired servants ; and we are surely not going too far, when in perfect charity we declare, that heavy must be the responsibility of those who make any such impious attempt. Shall not the Lord govern his Church independently of the puny devices of man ? and shall he not be indignant at those who endeavour to overthrow the authority of his regularly commissioned servants, and to place others in their stead ? But we are here taking it for granted, that a particular regimen was divinely instituted by Christ and his Apostles, for the government of his Holy Church ; and if we are wrong in this particular, we are only shooting our arrows against the sun, and perchance they may fall upon our own heads. It certainly appears to us, without opening a single page of the New Testament, that there is a sufficient amount of evidence from analogy, and the reason of the thing, for expecting to find such an institution therein contained. We have a strong analogy from the example of the Jewish Church, in which we find a regular church government, instituted by God himself, under the High Priest, Priests and Levites,—an analogy which has drawn from the venerable Bishop Jolly, in the Introduction to his Sunday Services, the following comments. In speaking of the Church, he says, “ It is clearly seen as a city set upon a hill in the light of both the Old and the New Testament ; where we plainly trace its government, that of the New analogous to the Old ; not confined however to narrow bounds, but calculated for all the nations of the earth. The High Priest, Priests and Levites of the Jews, are succeeded by the Bishops, Priests and Deacons of the Gentiles ; as St Jerome long ago observed, ‘ what Aaron and his sons and the Levites were in the Temple, the Bishops, the Priests and Deacons, are in the Church.’ ” As to the reason of the thing, what requires to be said more than this,—That Jehovah is a God of order, and that consequently his kingdom must be a kingdom of order. Let us ask any unprejudiced person, then, what is the chief characteristic of a kingdom of order ? Is it the circumstance, that any member of the community may assume the magisterial office at his pleasure, and give forth the issues of life and death, without any commission beyond that which he has assumed to himself ? or is it not rather the circumstance, that all the supreme Judges of the land receive their commissions from their Sovereign, and thus preserve in their judgments and decrees, that harmony and unity of council which necessarily accompany a harmony and unity of appointment ? And if such a harmony is beautiful in an earthly kingdom, because it promotes peace and security to the lives and properties of its subjects ; how much more have we reason to expect a catholic spirit of unity, in all the affairs of the kingdom of God ! But, besides this argument from analogy, and the reason of the thing, the Scriptures themselves are fortunately very explicit, and shew that a particular system of Church government was divinely instituted.

Before proceeding, however, to prove this assertion, it may be expedient to mention distinctly those points which are to be maintained ; viz. 1st, That during the lives of the Apostles, there existed in the Church three distinct orders of ministers, viz. Apostles, afterwards styled *Angels of the Church, or Bishops*,—Presbyters or Elders,—and Deacons : 2dly, That the functions of ordination and mission belonged exclusively

to the first order, *i. e.* the Apostles, or those on whom they *specially* conferred those functions, as their successors in the government of the Church, *i. e.* the Angels of the Churches, on whom the title of Bishop was soon afterwards exclusively bestowed :—and *3dly*, That these three orders of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, have continued in the Church since the time of the Apostles to the present day. If we can substantiate by sound evidence what we have now undertaken to prove, then will it necessarily follow, that ordination by a duly consecrated bishop, (that is, a bishop who has derived his succession from the Apostles through the successive angels of the Churches,) must be necessary to every one who would obtain the honour of a part in the Christian ministry. After a Christian minister has once received this seal of his ministry, let his conduct be ever so exceptionable and inconsistent with those holy precepts which it is his duty to enforce, so long as he is allowed by his ecclesiastical superiors to remain in communion with the Church as one of its pastors, the people committed to his charge are not entitled to desert his ministrations of the word and sacraments, and go in search of strange pastors who have no commission to feed Christ's flock. We are aware that some *charitable* minds may accuse us of bigotry, for advancing what will appear to them such an extraordinary doctrine. In reply we have to state, that we have advanced it expressly on their account, that they may know the truth and practise it, however contrary it may be to their preconceived ideas. But we are far from asking them to believe any thing, for which we cannot give them a sufficient reason. The validity of a monarch's edicts, or of a judge's decrees, does not depend upon the private character of the men : and to shew that this analogy may be correctly extended to God's priesthood on earth, we refer to the words of our blessed Saviour :—“ The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat : all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do ; *but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not.*” If such advice then was administered by our Saviour to the multitude, respecting the scribes and the Pharisees, because they sat in Moses' seat ; the same argument surely applies to the obedience and respect due to those who occupy the Apostles' seat in the Christian Church.

The argument in favour of Episcopacy is generally divided into two branches. *1st*, The argument from Scripture : and *2dly*, The argument from tradition or history.

1. Before proceeding to the proof of Episcopacy from the New Testament, it may be expedient to make a few preliminary remarks, in order that our argument may be entirely divested of those difficulties with which the opponents of Episcopacy universally attempt to surround it. The subject against which they direct the whole of their artillery, is the circumstance that the word BISHOP, which is now universally used as the title of the highest clerical order, *appears* in several passages of the New Testament to be synonymous in meaning with the word PRESBYTER, which is now used as the title of the second order ; and from this circumstance, they have rashly concluded that the word Presbyter, as understood in modern Presbyterian judicatories, denotes the highest order of the Christian ministry, and have, at the same time, with much ingenuity, created for themselves a new order of their own, styled RULING ELDERS. Thus, along with their deacons, those very Presbyterians who cry out so loudly, that they can only discover *two* clerical orders in the

New Testament, *i. e.* the Presbyters and Deacons, nevertheless find themselves, at the present moment, in possession of *three* orders in every parish of Scotland; viz. the Presbyter of the parish, or *minister*, the *ruling elders*, and the *deacons*. The only point for discussion, therefore, between the Presbyterians and us, is, whether *their* three orders, or the three orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, are duly constituted. With regard to the respective extents of a parish and a diocese, we hold that to be a matter of the most perfect indifference; for, as the Presbyterians say with considerable acuteness, that it is not a parish that constitutes a minister, so we must be allowed the benefit of the argument, in saying that it is not a diocese that constitutes a bishop.—We hesitate not to admit, then, that in the New Testament, the words bishop and presbyter are sometimes synonymously used; and we are so liberal as to admit farther, that if the argument merely concerned names, we could not support those principles by which every Episcopal communion is distinguished; but we maintain, at the same time, that in the same circumstances, the argument would be equally fatal to our adversaries; for we defy them to shew us either the name of a *ruling elder* or of a moderator in any part of the New Testament. The judicious Hooker remarks, that “things are older than the names whereby they are called.” If we apply this remark to any practical case, the absurdity of the argument by which our sentiments are impugned is immediately exposed. Thus we are informed, that upon the sixth day, “God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind;”<sup>\*</sup> and we farther read, that “Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.”<sup>†</sup> From this it appears, that the Almighty thought it sufficient for himself to create all living animals, but allowed Adam to give them names; and there was not a less striking difference between the appearance and strength of the various species of animals, previous to their receiving different names, than after they had received them. In the same way this argument applies, with peculiar accuracy, to the different orders of the Christian ministry, which Christ and his Apostles formed, but whose names they did not fix with minute accuracy; for those different orders, like the animals, existed with their different degrees of rank and power before the names were given to them, by which they were afterwards called. This will farther appear from a few remarks which we shall now make, upon the meaning of the words Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon, as used in the New Testament.

These terms, when literally interpreted, may have a general as well as a special sense, and it was from a want of due attention to this important fact, that the opposition to Episcopacy originally arose. Dr Russell says, “The Greek word which in the New Testament is translated Bishop, literally signifies a superintendent, or overseer, and is by ancient authors applied indiscriminately to civil, to ecclesiastical, and even to military officers.”<sup>‡</sup> Confining the word superintendent solely to ecclesiastical officers, it is very clear that it possesses both a general and a special sense, for it equally applies to the superintendent of a con-

<sup>\*</sup> Gen. i. 23.

<sup>†</sup> Ibid. ii. 20.

<sup>‡</sup> See Dr Russell's Sermon, preached at the consecration of the Right Reverend Dr Walker.



gregation, *i. e.* a *Presbyter*, and to the superintendent of a body of presbyters, *i. e.* a *Bishop*; but we are not therefore entitled to conclude, that because on some particular occasions it was used in the former sense, it should universally be used in that sense alone, any more than we are entitled to conclude that the generic term, animal, which is used when speaking of a dog, may not be used when speaking of a lion, who is a much more powerful animal; and we shall leave it to our readers to determine the character of that man's logic, who should feel inclined to say that a dog and a lion are synonymous terms, because the word "animal" happens to apply to both.

The word *Presbyter*, when literally translated, denotes a person advanced in years, but is often used in the Old Testament as expressive of civil office and dignity. In the New Testament it is sometimes used in a general, and sometimes in a special sense, but it is always given to those who are counted worthy of honour. Thus the apostles occasionally call themselves Elders,\* while at other times the two orders are kept distinct, as in Acts xv. 22, 23. Long after the time of the Apostles, indeed, the word *Presbyter* was not definitely fixed to its special sense; for we find Victor, Bishop of Rome, called a *Presbyter*, and Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, called "*Presbyter Ecclesiæ Lugdunensis*;" and we have never heard it doubted by any person, that both Victor and Irenæus were bishops in our special interpretation of the word.

"The term *Deacon*," Dr Russell observes, "means a servant or assistant, and was appointed to the third or lowest order of ministers, whose office appears to have varied at different times, but who in the earliest ages of the Church were commissioned to baptize, to preach, and to assist in the administration of the Lord's Supper." This expression, like the two others, had a general as well as a more special meaning; and we accordingly find it used in the New Testament in relation to the ministry of the Apostles, and even of the blessed Redeemer himself.

Nothing can shew more conclusively than this, the absurdity of attempting to form a system of Church government from the words *Bishop*, *Presbyter*, and *Deacon*, as used in their general sense in the New Testament; for we must thus necessarily look upon our blessed Saviour himself as a deacon,† and upon his Apostles as both presbyters and deacons; and since we cannot induce our adversaries to come to the same understanding with ourselves with respect to the special meaning of these terms, it occurs to us to be the most expedient plan to lay aside particular names as much as possible, and inquire into the conduct and practice of the Apostles in the government of the Church, as exhibited to us in the New Testament.

The Christian Church was founded by Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, and the Great High Priest of all the nations of the earth. His heavenly commission was supernaturally evidenced at Jordan, where, after his baptism, "the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending upon him; and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."‡ Upon this high commission St Paul, speaking of the honour of Christ's priesthood, makes the following comment: "AND NO MAN TAKETH THIS

\* 1 Peter v. 1. Eph. ii. 1. Eph. iii. 1. † Rom. xv. 8. ‡ Matth. iii. 16, 17.

HONOUR UNTO HIMSELF, BUT HE THAT IS CALLED OF GOD, AS WAS AARON. *So also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.*"\*

Our blessed Saviour, being thus in possession of his divine commission, immediately began the work for which he was ordained, and "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; *pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*"† The Great Bishop of our souls accordingly ordained the twelve Apostles, whom he sent out, after having delivered a charge to them upon the conduct which he wished them to pursue. That we may be fully aware of the consequences resulting from a refusal to receive and listen to God's duly commissioned servants, we should never lose sight of these his memorable words contained in this charge: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." And again: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."‡ Our blessed Saviour afterwards appointed other seventy, whom he sent out two by two; and again he repeated to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; *pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*"||

From the time that the Seventy were sent out, until our Saviour's ascension, we hear of no additional labourers in the vineyard; and from what we have already stated, it must be obvious to the meanest capacity, that neither the Twelve, who were first sent out, nor the Seventy, who were afterwards ordained, had the power of communicating ordination and mission to others, but that our Saviour reserved that power to himself; for the language which he invariably addressed to them, was, "*pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*" The government of the Christian Church, therefore, during our Saviour's sojourn on earth, was entirely in his own hands; but as it was ordained from all eternity that His visible presence should be removed for a little from His Church, He, out of His most gracious kindness and providence, did not leave us in His absence as sheep without a shepherd; for, previous to His ascension, He re-ordained the ELEVEN Apostles, and communicated to them alone superior powers to those which they had previously possessed. Unto them Jesus said, "Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, EVEN SO SEND I YOU. And when he had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."§ "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach

\* Heb. v. 4, 5.

|| Luke x. 1.

† Matt. ix. 35, 36, 37, 38.

§ John xx. 21, 22, 23.

‡ Ibid. x. 14, 15, 40.

all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo ! I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.”\* The government of the Christian Church, which, as we have already seen, comprehended the powers of ordination and mission, was thus conferred by our Saviour himself on his eleven Apostles, accompanied with a promise, that He would be with them even to the end of the world : in other words, from the moment of our Saviour’s ascension, the eleven Apostles occupied his place as *governors* over the Christian community, for “they were *sent* by Him, as He himself was sent by His Father ;” so that immediately after our Saviour’s ascension, there were eleven supreme governors of the Church, who possessed the power of ordination and mission ; and there were under them the seventy disciples, who had merely the functions committed to them by their original ordination, but without the power either of ordaining, or of sending forth others.

Having now traced the government of the Christian Church from the beginning of our Saviour’s ministry until His ascension, we shall continue our inquiries with respect to that government as it existed during the lives of the Apostles, confining ourselves to that information which is to be found in their inspired writings. In these writings, no doubt, the government of the Church is not laid down in such a systematic order as the Jewish establishment was under the old dispensation, and the reason for such a difference is sufficiently clear ;—when the Apostles wrote their Epistles, the Church had been already founded, and its constitution was familiar to every Christian. It was therefore sufficient for them to caution Christian converts against heretical teachers, without delivering formal orations upon a subject which was so universally known. In St Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy, to which we will refer more particularly hereafter, he charges him to be assiduous in his ministry, and says, “For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, BUT AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS, SHALL THEY HEAP TO THEMSELVES TEACHERS, HAVING ITCHING EARS ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”† St Peter, in his Second General Epistle, says, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in *damnable heresies*, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction : and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”‡ And we farther find it commended in the angel of Ephesus, that he tried them which called themselves apostles, and were found liars. ||

But although we do not find that Church government is laid down in these inspired writings in a systematic order, still we find a sufficient body of evidence to satisfy any reasonable man of the apostolical institution of Episcopacy ;—a body of evidence which, we may at present observe, was sufficient to satisfy the *whole* Christian world, *without any exception*, for fifteen centuries. We have already proved that our Saviour, before his ascension, conferred a supremacy of power in His

\* Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

† 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

‡ 2 Peter ii. 1, 2.

|| Rev. ii. 2.



Church UPON THE ELEVEN APOSTLES ALONE,—a supremacy which comprehended the exclusive right of ordaining and sending forth preachers of the gospel; and that he had previously ordained and sent out seventy individuals to preach the gospel, who, whatever their power of working miracles might have been, had no power of conferring ordination and mission upon others. We now maintain that these eleven Apostles, in the fulness of their apostolical character, displayed their supremacy in the Church in the same way as our Saviour himself had done; that they ordained and sent forth Presbyters and Deacons, which Presbyters and Deacons had no power of ordaining others; and that they *also* ordained and raised others to their own order, and sent them forth as their assistants and successors in the government of the Church, as they themselves had been sent by the Saviour, *i. e.* with a supremacy of power, which comprehended the functions of ordination and mission.

We have already seen from the 22d verse of the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that the order of Apostles was different from, and higher than the order of Presbyters, for we are therein informed that “then it pleased the Apostles AND Presbyters, &c. (not Apostles OR Presbyters); and that the Deacons constituted a third order inferior to the other two, is a fact which never has been disputed. The existence of three orders in the Christian ministry being thus established, (which was the first point to be proved,) the truth of the second point, *viz.* “that the functions of ordination and remission belonged exclusively to the highest order,” almost follows as a corollary; at all events, the presumption of its truth is so strong, as to throw the *onus probandi* on those who impugn it. The very idea of a pre-eminence of order supposes the existence of a controuling power over inferior officers; for otherwise the pre-eminence would cease to exist; and how can this controuling power be exhibited except in the exclusive power of ordaining those inferior officers, and superintending their conduct after they are ordained? Although then we have already said enough (in the absence of proof to the contrary) to establish the second point which we undertook to prove, yet we cannot allow the argument to terminate here, but will proceed to its completion in such a manner, as to leave no honest doubt in any person’s mind on the subject.

The proceedings of the Apostles are recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles* in a very brief and concise manner; and although they do not contain any regular treatise upon the subject of Church polity, they nevertheless furnish the ingenuous inquirer after truth with sufficient evidence for Episcopacy, independently of the evidence contained in other portions of the inspired writings. Throughout the whole of this history we find continual reference made to the existence of three separate orders of ecclesiastical officers, possessing different degrees of rank and power. Besides St Paul, whose appointment to the apostleship, as is mentioned in the Acts, and as he himself tells us, was “not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;”\* we hear that the Apostles raised several others to their own order, as Matthias;† Barnabas, who is called an Apostle;‡ Timothy, Titus, Dionysius the Areopagite at Athens, Caius at Thessalonica, Archippus at Colosse, Onesimus at Ephesus, Antipas at Pergamos, Epa-

\* Gal. i. 1.

† Acts i. 26.

‡ Ibid. xvi. 14.

phroditus at Philippi, Crescens among the Gauls, Evodias at Antioch, Sosipater at Iconium, Erastus in Macedonia, Trophimus at Arles, Jason at Tarsus, Silas at Corinth, Onesiphorus at Colophon, Quartus at Berytus, Paul the pro-consul at Narbona;\* and we have no doubt that they raised many more to the high calling of the Apostleship, whose names are not recorded in Scripture, as all these are. We farther hear that the Apostles ordained elders in every city,† and that they ordained seven deacons;‡ but upon no occasion whatever do we find ordination conferred by any one *below* the rank of an Apostle. Although, therefore, in “the Acts” we have no plan of Church government systematically laid down, we have enough of evidence to prove that the presbyters whom Paul and Barnabas ordained in every city, were exactly upon the same footing with the seventy disciples ordained and sent out by our Saviour; *i. e.* that they had no power to confer ordination and mission on others, because such a function was never hinted at, and much less exercised by them; and we must consequently hold that the highest order alone (*i. e.* apostles) exclusively possessed the functions of ordination and mission, which we find them constantly exercising.

But that this supremacy belonged exclusively to the highest order, we have farther strong corroborative evidence to produce in the case of James, who was Bishop of Jerusalem, and who constantly presided at all ecclesiastical meetings held there, in the character of a Judge of Controversy; and in the cases also of Timothy and Titus, who were placed over the respective Churches of Ephesus and Crete, by St Paul himself; and as these last are the only two instances of Church government which are systematically laid down, our readers will probably excuse us for making a few remarks upon them.

St Paul, in his First Epistle to Timothy, after stating to him the necessary qualifications of presbyters, (here called bishops) and deacons, says, “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality: Lay hands suddenly on no man,” &c. St Paul thus communicates to him the exclusive right of ordaining the presbyters and deacons, and proceeds to constitute a Bishop’s Court, when he says to Timothy, “Against a presbyter receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses; them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”

There are two objections generally brought forward against Timothy’s apostleship, which, however trifling they may be, it is necessary for us to notice, lest our adversaries should imagine, that by us they are unanswerable. These two objections are, *1st*, That Timothy was an Evangelist, not an Apostle; and *2dly*, That he was ordained by a Presbytery, according to the modern acceptance of that term.—The foundation for the first of these objections arises from these words of St Paul addressed to Timothy: “Do the work of an evangelist.” Now, when our adversaries prove to us, which they never can do, that an apostle may not be an evangelist also, we shall readily acknowledge that Timothy was merely an evangelist. An apostle sent out to christianize a country, must necessarily indeed be the evangelist of that country. But on the other

\* Works of Bishop Taylor, Heber’s Edition, vol. VII. p. 72. and authorities there cited.

† Acts xiv. 23.

‡ Ibid. vi. 6.

hand, an evangelist may not be qualified to do the work of an apostle, (which Timothy certainly did ;) as is shewn in the case of Philip the *deacon*, who planted the Church in Samaria, and is called an *evangelist*, but who never did, nor could lay his hands on any man to make him a Presbyter or a Deacon.—With respect to the second objection against Timothy's apostleship, viz. "that he was ordained by a Presbytery, according to the modern acceptation of the word," it is founded on these words in the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, WITH THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY." The word Presbytery here means the Presbyterial office belonging to St Paul, and not a council of Presbyters; and accordingly John Calvin is of this opinion: but St Paul's own comment on the subject, lays the matter for ever at rest: "Wherefore," says he, "I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee by the putting on of MY hands."\*

St Paul, in his Epistle to Titus, whom he sent to the Cretans as their Bishop or Apostle, says: "For, for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." He afterwards mentions that there are some people, whose mouths must be stopped, and tells him to rebuke them sharply, and reject those who are heretics after the first and second admonition.

The only other proof which we shall now adduce from the New Testament for Episcopacy, is to be found in the Book of Revelation, in which St John says that our blessed Saviour appeared unto him, and commanded him to write the Epistles therein narrated to the angels of the Seven Churches of Asia. That the angels here spoken of, were individuals respectively governing these Churches, there cannot be the slightest doubt; and the extent and duration of their authority, may be very well measured, by the great responsibility attached to them in their official capacities even unto their death.† Scultetus, a learned Protestant writer, in his observations upon Titus, says, "The most learned interpreters all expound the angels of the seven Churches, to be the bishops of those Churches, neither can they expound the words otherwise, unless they offer violence to the text." The infidel historian Gibbon, thinks it expedient to maintain that Episcopacy was merely a political institution of the primitive Church; in order that he may furnish himself with the last of his five *secondary* causes, which he alleges for the remarkable victory obtained by Christianity over the established religions of the earth. In the 15th chapter he says, "The advantages of this Episcopal form of government, which appears to have been introduced *before the end of the first century*, were so obvious, and so important for the future greatness as well as the present peace of Christianity, that it was adopted without delay by all the societies which were already scattered over the Empire," &c. And it is somewhat remarkable, that this assserter of the human institution of Episcopacy, in a note upon the passage just quoted, says, "SEE THE INTRODUCTION TO THE APOCALYPSE. BISHOPS, UNDER THE NAME OF ANGELS, *were already instituted in the seven cities of Asia.*" This little note certainly contains proof of the apostolical, but NOT of the HUMAN institution of Episcopacy. But we fortunately possess another clue



by which the office of those angels may be accurately discovered. We have already alluded to the authority of Timothy in the Church of Ephesus, and have seen what his powers were. Now, supposing Timothy to have been dead before the Epistle narrated in the Book of Revelation was addressed to the angel of the Church of Ephesus, which was no doubt the case; an important fact is elicited from that circumstance, that although that Church had been already founded, and Presbyters and Deacons ordained in it by Timothy, yet his place after his death was occupied by another as its spiritual governor. And as it is by no means an illogical method of reasoning, to judge of a king's prerogatives from those of his immediate predecessors; so from this analogy, we may maintain that there is every presumption for supposing that the angel of Ephesus here addressed, possessed the same power and authority as Timothy his predecessor; which power and authority included the exclusive right of conferring ordination and mission, in his diocese of Ephesus. His supremacy of power, indeed, may be proved by his responsibility, which was so great, that we are informed the very existence of the Church of Ephesus depended on his conduct. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, *and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*"\* That the candlestick here mentioned means the Church of Ephesus, is proved by what our Saviour is reported to have said to John: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches."† Having thus ascertained the power and authority of one of the seven angels, we must necessarily look upon the other six, as having possessed a corresponding power in their respective Churches; for from the style in which they are all addressed, it is obvious that each was the supreme governor of the Church of which he is called the angel; and our ideas are completely confirmed by the universal voice of Christian antiquity. Polycrates, who was a Bishop of Ephesus in the second century, speaks of seven of his predecessors, who had been bishops there before him; and Leontius, Bishop of Magnesia, in the council of Chalcedon, speaks of twenty-seven bishops of Ephesus successively from Timothy. In a little tract, called the "Differences of the Times," it is stated, "We find the Bishops of those seven Churches of Asia present at the first council of Nice, and designed by their several Churches, EPHEsus, SMYRNA, &c., and subscribing the acts of that Council with the rest of the bishops. *Jerome, de Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, tells us that Polycarp, who had been St John's disciple, was by him made Bishop of Smyrna. So *Eusebius*, lib. 3. cap. 32.; so *Tertullian, Præscrip.* cap. 32. And *Iræneus*, lib. 3. cap. 3. *contra Valentin.* says, "Polycarp was by John ordained Bishop of Smyrna, and that he saw Polycarp when he himself was a child; for, says he, Polycarp lived long: and farther, among Ignatius his Epistles, who was contemporary with the apostle John, we find one written to this Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who is thought to be the very same angel to whom John writeth."‡

We have now seen, that besides the universal tenor of Scripture being in favour of Episcopacy, the only two Churches whose government is systematically laid down by the inspired writers, were both

\* Rev. ii. 5.

† Ibid. i. 20.

‡ In the 2d Chapter of the Revelations.

clearly and unequivocally Episcopal Churches, each of which was governed by its bishop, angel, or apostle, who had the exclusive right of ordaining the clergy. We have also seen that Episcopal government existed in the seven Churches of Asia ; but even if we had failed in this latter particular, we are convinced that the evidence which we have already advanced, would at once decide any practical matter in which the disingenuous passions of men were not called into action. Suppose, for instance, that a foreigner wished to become acquainted with the way in which our military service in this country is conducted ; how would he proceed ? Why ! he would no doubt study the government and discipline of a particular Regiment. He would inquire how many officers commanded it ; from what quarter they derived their commissions ; and whether there were various gradations of rank among those officers. The result of this inquiry would be, that he would very soon discover, that all the commissions proceeded from the King ; that in the regiment there was one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, two majors, with so many captains, lieutenants, and ensigns, with different degrees of military rank.—Well, suppose this same stranger was disposed to scrutinize the government and discipline of another regiment, and found exactly the same result as in the former case ; then might he with great propriety say, “ I need not carry my investigation any farther, for I have no doubt, that as all the other regiments are in the service of the same master with those which I have already examined, they have the same government and discipline, and as I have the pleasure of being acquainted with the colonels of six or seven other regiments, I have no doubt that there is a colonel in every regiment, and that every colonel has under him a lieutenant-colonel, a couple of majors, so many captains, lieutenants, and ensigns.” Again, suppose this foreigner wished to become acquainted with the constitution of the various civil judicatories of Scotland, he would no doubt inquire in that part of that country where he happened to be residing at the time, in what manner civil disputes were settled ; and upon investigation he would discover, that there was a judge called the sheriff, who derived his commission from the crown ; and also a sheriff-substitute, who derived his commission from his principal ; that the jurisdiction of these officers extended over a certain district of country, called a county ; and that an appeal lay from their decisions, to the Court of Session. He might then be so inquisitive, as to make similar inquiries with respect to another district of country ; and then having arrived at similar results as in the former case, he might with great propriety conclude, that Scotland was divided into counties, and that each county had a sheriff, and sheriff-substitute, appointed in the same way as those whose appointment he had individually considered ; and the presumption for this would amount almost to a moral certainty, if he happened to be acquainted with the sheriffs of other seven counties, for the idea could not fail to suggest itself, that as these seven sheriffs were local judges in the service of the same master with the other two, they must necessarily derive their commission from the same source, and must possess similar authority.

We have now shewn from the New Testament, that during the lives of the apostles, there existed in the Christian Church three orders of pastors, viz. Apostles, afterwards called Angels of the Churches,—Presbyters or Bishops,—and Deacons ; and that to the first of these orders

alone; the exclusive right of conferring ordination and mission belonged: When our adversaries find themselves unable to withstand these facts, they adopt an expedient, the very boldness of which is a presumptive proof of its weakness. They assert that the highest of these three orders was one of an extraordinary character, and was not intended to be preserved after the apostolic age. As well, on the other hand, might we assert, that the respective orders of Presbyter and Deacon, who also possessed extraordinary powers, were of an extraordinary character, and were not intended to be continued in the Church. The only legitimate conclusion which we can form, is, that as we find, during the lives of the Apostles, three orders of pastors in the Church, with certain ordinary powers of administration belonging to each, these three orders must consequently be commensurate with the existence of the Church itself, unless the Almighty shall be pleased to grant us another revelation of his will. If this conclusion be illogical, then it follows from the very premises laid down by our adversaries themselves, that the Church is deprived of an Apostolic ministry altogether, and the commission of the Christian priesthood is made to flow from man and not from God; for if the possession of extraordinary powers by the Apostles prevented them from having successors with ordinary powers, the same cause would equally prevent the Presbyters and Deacons from having successors in the ministry of the Church. There are some, we are aware, who believe, that the ministers in Church and State, both derive their authority from the voice of the people. To such we frankly confess that we do not here address ourselves: more sensible people will conclude, that as the visible Church comprehends within it a part of the heavenly kingdom, that Church must be governed by those whose commission is not of man, but of God.

II. If any doubt, however, should exist in our minds, with respect to the necessity of the continuance of all the three orders above mentioned, after the foundation of the holy structure had been laid, this doubt must be entirely dissipated by the universal practice of the Church in its first and purest ages, as recorded by those holy men who had conversed with, and been instructed by the apostles; and who afterwards died martyrs for the Christian faith. So strong and unequivocal is their evidence, that, as Bishop Jolly has remarked, were the "Evidence of holy Scripture less clear than it really is, the loud voice of the Church, the harmonious testimony of the Apostolic and primitive fathers, as strong to the full for Episcopacy as for the canon of Scripture, ought to silence our doubts, and unite us all in one communion and fellowship. Happy, thrice happy were it, would all Christians seek, and so they would find the ancient paths, returning to that primitive unity, for the perpetuity of which our Lord so earnestly and repeatedly prayed; that all his followers being perfectly united, the world might be the sooner induced to believe in him." Before producing this evidence from tradition or history, we shall, for the purpose of preventing misconception, make a few remarks with respect to the value which we ascribe to it.

Suppose two individuals, of equal piety and learning, should entertain different opinions respecting the meaning of some particular passages of the New Testament; it is quite clear that both parties cannot be orthodox, since truth is one in all ages and in all nations; and it is farther clear, that neither party can refer to the decision of any living infallible



authority. It is therefore expedient, on such an occasion, to refer to the purest ages of the primitive Church, and thence endeavour to discover the interpretation given by those holy men, who lived at, and immediately after the time of the Apostles, and who were therefore much more likely to be acquainted with the true meaning of any particular passage of the Scriptures than we can possibly be at the present day. If one of the parties then can prove to the other, that the interpretation for which he is contending, has been observed in the Church catholic since the time of the Apostles, may he not with great propriety say to his opponent, what St Paul said to the Corinthians, "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." \*

We do not attempt, then, like the Romanists, to put tradition upon the same footing with the inspired writings; all that we assert is, that when any difference of opinion takes place among Christians, the practice of the Church catholic in the earliest ages, must be allowed by all sober-minded men to decide the controversy. On this principle we appeal to the writers of the primitive Church for the evidence of any Apostolic institution, just as we appeal for the elucidation of any historical truth to contemporary historians.

It would be difficult for Christians to defend their holy religion against the attacks of the sceptic and the infidel, in a satisfactory manner, and much more so to prove the true canon of Scripture, without the testimony of the primitive Church; for then the chain of evidence for the miraculous events connected with our blessed Saviour's ministry, and that of his Apostles, would be broken; and the very foundation of the Christian Church would thus be undermined. If this evidence were removed, the Christian religion would necessarily become a matter of superstition, in so far as our belief would then resemble that of the Hindoos and Mahometans, who respect the writings connected with their superstitions, from the mere prejudice of education, and not from a rational and overwhelming evidence for the miracles by which their religions are said to be attested.

The Apostolic institution of infant baptism rests upon the same footing. When our Saviour sent forth the eleven Apostles, previous to his ascension, he told them to go and teach all nations, baptising them, &c.; from which charge it might be at first sight concluded, that a personal profession of the faith should necessarily precede every Christian's baptism: upon what ground, then, can our Presbyterian neighbours defend the Apostolic institution of infant baptism against the Baptists, unless they bring the testimony of the primitive Church to their aid, for the purpose of clearing up the doubts that must otherwise exist upon the subject?—The Apostolical institution of the First Day of the Week as a weekly commemoration of our blessed Saviour's resurrection from the dead, cannot be distinctly proved except by referring to the testimony of the primitive Christians; for all that we hear of such an institution in the New Testament is, that the Christians frequently met together on the first day of the week, and that our Saviour sanctioned this practice by his presence. Beyond this, there is no evidence in Scripture of such an institution; and such being the case, if the testi-

\* 1 Cor. xi. 16.

mony of the primitive Church is disregarded, we can have no full assurance that such a practice should be continued in subsequent ages.

We shall now therefore inquire into the testimony of the Christian Church in the ages immediately after that of the Apostles ; for, as Tertullian says, " It will be allowed that that was delivered by the Apostles, which was considered sacred by the Apostolic churches," &c. ; and in the first place, we shall produce extracts from the writings of the three Apostolic fathers, Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp.

Clement, who is mentioned by St Paul, as having his name written in the Book of Life, and whom Christian antiquity calls the fourth bishop of Rome, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, § 40. says, " To the high priest proper offices are committed ; to priests their proper station is assigned ; Levites have their proper ministries ; and a layman is bound by laick precepts. Let every one of you, brethren, give thanks to God, living conscientiously, without transgressing the prescribed rule of his service or ministry." Clement seems here to have mentioned the various offices of the Christian Church under Jewish names, to shew the Corinthians how exactly similar the Church government of the new dispensation was to that of the old. In the same epistle we also find the following sentence : " Our Apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ, that contention would arise about the name of Episcopacy ; and for this reason, having a full knowledge of this beforehand, they ordained the aforesaid ministers, and afterwards regulated the manner of the succession, that when they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministration."

Ignatius was made Bishop of Antioch about the year 69, and suffered martyrdom at Rome, in the year 110. Having lived and conversed with the Apostles, and received his ordination, as we are informed, from St Peter, his writings necessarily afford a very valuable testimony upon those subjects of which they treat. In his epistle to the Trallians, he says, " For, when ye are subject to your BISHOP as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, that so believing in his death, we might escape death. It is therefore necessary, that as ye do, so without your bishop you should do nothing. Also be ye subject to your PRESBYTERS, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ our Hope, in whom if we walk we shall be found in him. The DEACONS also, being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means study to please all, for they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the Church of God. I exhort you therefore, or rather not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, that ye use none but Christian nourishment, abstaining from pasture which is of another kind, I mean heresy. For they that are heretics confound together the doctrine of Jesus Christ with their own poison, whilst they seem worthy of belief ; as men give a deadly potion mixed with sweet wine, which he who is ignorant of, does, with the treacherous pleasure, sweetly drink in his own death. Wherefore guard yourselves against such persons, and that you will do, if you are not puffed up, but continue inseparable from Jesus Christ our God, and from your Bishop, and from the commands of the Apostles. He that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without, that is, does any thing without the Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons, is not pure in his conscience." In his epistle also to the Church of Smyrna, of which Polycarp was at that time

Bishop, he says, "See that you all follow your *Bishop* as Jesus Christ, and the *Presbyters* as the Apostles, and reverence the *Deacons* as the appointment of God. Let no man do any thing belonging to the Church, in separation from the bishop. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as regularly administered, which is either offered by the bishop himself, or by him to whom the bishop has confided this duty. It is not lawful without the bishop, either to baptize or to celebrate the holy communion; but whatever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing unto God, and whatsoever is so done, is surely and well done."

The opponents of Episcopacy, feeling themselves baffled by the strength of the language contained in St Ignatius' Epistles, have had the hardihood to assert, that they are forged and counterfeit; but if any man in the present day should have the least doubt of their authenticity, let Bishop Pearson be his oracle. Polycarp, who was Bishop of Smyrna when Ignatius wrote his Epistle to that Church, says in his Epistle to the Philippians, "You wrote to me, both you *and Ignatius*, that if any one went from hence into Syria, he should bring your letters with him: which also I shall take care of, as soon as I shall have a convenient opportunity. The Epistles of Ignatius, which he wrote unto us, together with what others of his have come into our hands, we have sent you agreeably to your request. They are subjoined to this Epistle, and by them you may greatly profit, for they treat of faith and patience, and of all things that pertain to edification in the Lord Jesus." With respect to any interpolations which may have afterwards been made, all learned writers upon the subject are satisfied that such interpolations do not relate to what he says of the different orders of the Christian ministry. And as it is well known that the papal authority arose on the successful depression of the Episcopal, it cannot be supposed that the Romanists would have sanctioned any interpolations which asserted the Episcopal pre-eminence.

The third Apostolic father, whose name we have mentioned, is Polycarp, with whom Ignatius says he conversed, and that he was ordained Bishop of Smyrna by John. As there is very little of Polycarp's writings which bears expressly on our subject, we shall be content with shewing that he asserted his own superiority over the Presbyters in the diocese of Smyrna; for the inscription of his Epistle to the Philippians above mentioned, is, "Polycarp, and the Presbyters that are with him, unto the Church of God which is at Philippi."

Passing on to the second and third centuries, we find clouds of witnesses attesting Episcopacy to be the government of the whole Christian Church. Prus, Bishop of Rome, A. D. 146, writing to Justus, newly elected Bishop of Vienna in the room of Verus, says, "Let the Presbyters and Deacons reverence thee, who are placed in the room of Verus, by thy (Episcopal) brethren, and dressed with the Bishop's habit, not as one greater, but as the servant of Christ."—IRÆNEUS, Bishop of Lyons, about the year 180, in his work *Contra Valentin*. lib. III. cap. 3. says, "We can enumerate those who were appointed Bishops in the churches by the Apostles, and their successors, down to our times." And accordingly he gives a catalogue of these Bishops, who had governed the most conspicuous and best known churches. In lib. iv. cap. 43. he says, "We must obey those priests who are in the Church, who have their succession from the Apostles, and who, with the succession of Episcopacy,



have received the sure gift of truth, according to the will of the Father. As for others who cut themselves off from the principal succession, whatever part of the world they are in, they ought to be suspected as heretics, dividers, saucy hypocrites, self-pleasers, doing things for gain or vain glory ; all such persons depart from the truth." TERTULLIAN, who lived about the end of the second century, in his Book of *Prescriptions against Heretics*, cap. 32. says, " Let them declare the original of their churches ; let them turn over and find out the order of their Bishops, running down by succession from the beginning, that this first bishop of theirs had an Apostle, or Apostolic men that never separated from the Apostles, for his founder and predecessor ; for after this manner do the Apostolic churches make their computations, as the Church of Smyrna has Polycarp placed there by St John ; and the Church of Rome has Clement ordained by St Peter ; and even as other churches can demonstrate, who were ordained Bishops over them, by those of the Apostolic succession."

We might also produce extracts from the writings of Dionysius Bishop of Corinth, Polycrates Bishop of Ephesus, and Clemens Alexandrinus, all of whom lived in the second age. But as we are afraid that such a superabundance of testimony might exhaust the patience of our readers, we shall at once pass on to Jerome, as he is the only person of any weight in the earliest ages of the Church, whose testimony has been adduced by modern Theologians against the apostolic institution of Episcopacy.

Jerome lived about the end of the fourth, or beginning of the fifth century, and as he speaks in the same terms, and with the same decision as his predecessors, it is proper that his memory should be vindicated from the false aspersions that have been cast upon it. In his Epistle to Evagrius, he says, " Wheresoever a bishop is placed, whether at Rome or Eugubium, at Constantinople or Rhegium, Alexandria or Sanis, he has the same power and the same priesthood ; neither the elevation of riches nor the depression of poverty makes a bishop higher or lower, *but they are all successors of the Apostles.*" In his Epistle Adversus Luciferianos, he says, " The safety of the Church depends upon the dignity of the bishop, (*summi sacerdotis*) to whom unless there be given by all a supereminent power, there would be as many schisms in the Church as there are priests. Hence it is, that without the bishop's authority neither a Presbyter nor a Deacon has the power of baptizing ; and the bishop must lay his hands on those who have been baptized by Presbyters and Deacons, for the invocation of the Holy Spirit on them." And in his Epistle Contra Montanum, he says, " *Apud nos, apostolorum locum Episcopi tenent :*" *with us the Bishops occupy the seats of the Apostles.* SO MUCH FOR THE OPINIONS OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.

During the Apostolic age, there existed general unanimity among all Christian societies with respect to the essentials of the true faith. This happy state of things was not, however, of long continuance ; and the introduction of heresy naturally occasioned an anxiety in the minds of the prelates for the preservation of the faith and unity of the Church. This led to the introduction of Provincial and General Councils ; and for the convenience of correspondence, the Church was at a very early period divided into five patriarchates, viz. Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople, each of which had a President, who was called its Patriarch. It would be irrelevant at present to trace the various steps by

which the Patriarchate of Rome endeavoured to swallow up all the others ; suffice it to say, that the Bishops of Rome, whose apostolical rank was not originally higher than that of any other Christian bishops, gradually assumed to themselves an universal supremacy in the Christian Church, upon the plea, that they sat in the chair of St Peter, on whom they maintained that Christ had bestowed an ecclesiastical supremacy of power. Most of our readers are probably aware that the foundation of this claim is the speech addressed by our Saviour to St Peter, when the latter acknowledged his belief that Jesus was the Son of God : “ And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” \* As the Romanists pretend upon all occasions to have a strong partiality for the opinions of the Doctors of the Church in the clearing up of controverted points, let us see what interpretation they put upon this supposed charter of St Peter’s supremacy. “ Some,” saith Abulensis, “ say that this rock is Peter ; others say, and better, that it is Christ ; others say, and yet better, that it is the confession that Peter maketh.”—(Tostat. on Matth. xvi. qu. 67.) St Austin, in his Retraction, says, “ that he had often expounded the words to the same purpose, although he did not absolutely reject that interpretation which made St Peter the rock ; leaving it to every one to choose which appeared to be the most correct.”—(Aug. Retr. i. 21. vide Aug. in Joh. tr. 124. de verb. Dom. in Matt. Sermon. 13. (tom. 10.) Ans. in Matt. xvi. 18.) St Chrysostom says, “ On the rock, that is, on the faith of his profession.”—(Chrysos. in Matt. xvi. 18.) And again, Christ said that he would build his Church on Peter’s confession.”—(Ibid. in John i. 50.) And again, “ On this *rock*, he said, *not* on Peter, for he did not build his Church on the *man*, but on his *faith*.”—(Ibid. tom. V. 163. Hill de Trin. 6.) Theodoret says, “ Our Lord did permit the first of the Apostles to fall, whose confession he did fix as a proof or foundation of the Church.”—(Theod. Ep. 77.) We might also quote to the same effect, Origen, Jerome, Basil, Cyprian, &c., not forgetting to mention that there is not even a hint of St Peter’s ecclesiastical supremacy given by any Christian writer who lived during the first two centuries.—We conclude our citations on this subject in the words of St Paul—“ Other foundation can no man lay, *than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*.”

This astonishing discovery of the Bishop of Rome’s universal supremacy, as may easily be imagined, was soon followed by others equally absurd ; and, in the progress of time, the cup of papal absurdity was filled to the brim. The infallibility of the Church was promulgated ; indulgences and purgatory came into existence ; a species of polytheism was instituted in the worship of the Virgin Mary and other saints ; and to crown the whole, transubstantiation, that foul dogma of superstition, became an article of the Romish faith.

It was not to be supposed, then, that a reformation of such monstrous innovations could be long delayed after the delivery of the human mind from the slavery of the Goth and the Vandal ; and the glorious invention of printing had the merit of enabling men to recover their scattered senses, and to tear from their eyes that hateful bandage, which had been adjusted with all the ingenuity that a crafty and designing priesthood could command. The Reformation accordingly arrived, although gradually, and was promoted in many places by men of the most

\* Matt. xiv. 18.



brilliant character and exalted talents, who displayed all that indignation which we may suppose would actuate any society of *loyal* subjects, who should discover that they had for a long period of years been imposed upon by a provincial magistrate, who misrepresented to them every message which their sovereign had forwarded to him for public proclamation. Loyal subjects would not, in such a case, dispute the legality of the wicked magistrate's commission, and assume to themselves the power of deposing him, and appointing his successor; but they would feel indignant at his treasonable conduct, and present a petition to their sovereign for his removal, and the substitution of another in his stead. And, accordingly, such were the sentiments of those loyal subjects of Christ, by whom the papal edifice was stormed. Scarce one of them dared to attack the sacred hierarchy of the Church: and even when in several places this hierarchy was set aside, and a *human* priesthood erected, its followers protested that it was absolute *necessity* alone which obliged them to act as they did. Their object was plainly not to infringe one iota on the exclusive commission vested by divine authority in the governors of the Church, but to remove those foul blots which had defaced Christianity through the long and successful depression of the Episcopal office by *upstart papal usurpation*.

Previous to the era of the Reformation, the divine institution of Episcopacy had never been disputed by any Church. "Not only among all the churches subject in the West to the Roman Pontiff, and in the East and South to the Patriarchs of Antioch, Byzantium, and Alexandria, but also among the numerous Christian societies who rejected their doctrine, and disowned their authority, were the three orders in question (Bishops; Priests, and Deacons,) established and maintained. The polity of the Nestorians, Monothelites, and Armenians, on one side of Christendom, as well as of the Albigenses, Waldenses, and Bohemians, on the other, was uniformly Episcopal, however widely most of these numerous sectaries were opposed to the rest, and to the great communities from which they separated. The most industrious explorer of church antiquity, searching from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Indian Ocean, from Abyssinia to Scandinavia, has never yet distinctly traced a single church, in which a hierarchy, possessed of diocesan rights and privileges, did not at the period referred to prevail." \*

We will now proceed to investigate the sentiments of those intrepid heroes, by whom the cause of the Reformation was so successfully prosecuted. The celebrated Augsburg Confession, which was drawn up by the venerable Melancthon, and subscribed by Luther and other eminent German divines, contains the following passage, among others to the same effect:—"And now here again we desire to testify to the world, that we would willingly preserve the ecclesiastical and canonical government, if the bishops would only cease to exercise cruelty upon our churches. This our desire will excuse us before God, before all the world, and unto all posterity, that it may not be justly imputed unto us, that the authority of bishops is impaired amongst us, when men shall hear and read, that we, earnestly deprecating the unjust cruelty of the bishops, could obtain no equal measures at their hands."

John Calvin, the great Genevan Reformer, and the alleged apostle of

\* The Rev. John Sinclair's First Dissertation on the Church of England.



Presbytery, in his treatise "on the Necessity of Reforming the Church," says, "If they (the Romanists) would exhibit to us a hierarchy, in which the bishops retained their eminence, but on such footing as not to refuse to obey Christ, looking to him as their ONE head, and submitting to his authority, then I will confess those to be worthy of every anathema (curse) who would not attend upon it (*i. e.* the hierarchy) reverently, and with the greatest obedience." In a letter addressed by him to an old friend, who had just been raised to the office of a bishop in the Church of Rome, he strongly advises him "either to do the duty of a bishop, or else to resign the bishop's seat," and says, "*Episcopacy itself has proceeded from God, and was instituted by God.*" That Calvin laboured hard to obtain Episcopal consecration from England, is quite established; for he and Bullinger, and other foreign Protestants, wrote, anno 1549, to King Edward VI., offering to have bishops in their churches; as may be seen in Cranmer's Memorials, and likewise by a writing of Archbishop Abbot, in which, upon the authority of Archbishop Parker's manuscript papers, he says, that this overture on the part of Calvin perished in consequence of his letter being intercepted by Gardiner and Bonner, who immediately replied to it in a very contemptuous strain; and that the letter was not discovered until the sixth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

Similar sentiments were entertained by other celebrated Doctors of the Genevan Church. BUCER, in his Book "De Regno Christi," says, "We see the constant practice of the Church, even from the time of the Apostles, how it hath pleased the Holy Ghost, that among the ministers to whom the government of the Church is especially committed, one individual should have the chief management both of the churches and of the whole ministry, and should in that management take precedence of all his brethren. For which reason, the title of Bishop is employed to designate a chief spiritual governor."—Beza also approved of a reformed Episcopacy, for in his DE MIN. GRAD. c. 18, 21. after extolling the English archbishops and bishops, he expresses a hope that the Church of England would ever be so distinguished. "May she enjoy that singular kindness of God, which I wish may be perpetual to her." And farther, he says, c. 13. "God forbid that I find fault with this order [of Bishops] *albeit apostolical*, and not established by mere divine appointment, as if it had been proudly and rashly brought in; yea, who can deny that it was of great use and benefit, while good and holy bishops were over the churches?" To Grindall, Bishop of London, he writes thus—"How much greater punishment shall they deserve, who shall condemn thy authority? Jesus keep thee and govern thee by his Holy Spirit, and confirm thee more and more *in that so great office* committed to thee. God hath appointed thee a watchman and a judge." Zanchius, an Italian reformer, in his treatise "De vera Reformandarum Ecclesiarum Ratione," says, "I profess before God, that in my conscience I repute them no other than schismatics, who make it a part of reformation of the Church to have no bishops, who should preside over their presbyters in degrees of authority, where this may be had. Furthermore, with Mr Calvin, I deem them worthy of all manner of anathemas, as many as will not be subject to that hierarchy which submits itself to the Lord Jesus."—The sentiments of the Polish and Hungarian Reformers upon the subject of ecclesiastical polity, may be expiscated from the following

oath of canonical obedience, which was required of every candidate for the Deaconship.—“I, N. N. swear before the living God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and before his holy angels, that I shall yield unto the bishop and presbyters (*senioribus*) all due obedience, as unto my superiors.—So help me God.”—(Canon. Eccl. Synod. Comiatinæ in Hungaria, Class iii. Can. 8.)—GROTIUS, the famous lawyer and divine, says, “Episcopacy had its beginning in the Apostolic times.”—“The bishop is of approved divine right. For this assertion the divine Apocalypse affords an irrefragable argument.”—“Those who think Episcopacy repugnant to God’s will, must condemn the whole primitive Church of folly and impiety.”—(Grot. De Imper. Summ. Potest. circa Sacra, cap. xi. sect. 5.)—Probably the most extraordinary testimony which we could produce for Episcopacy, since the period of the Reformation, is the testimony of the famous *Presbyterian Synod of Dort*, which was assembled for the purpose of establishing Calvinism in Holland. The Synod, being urged by the Church of England on the subject of Episcopal government, replied, that “they had a great honor for the Church of England, and heartily wished that they could establish themselves upon this model, lamenting that they had no prospect of such a happiness; and since the civil government had made their desires impracticable, they hoped God would be merciful to them.”\* We may also here quote the opinion of SALMASIUS, after he had for some time been the advocate of Presbyterian parity. In his answer to Milton, cited by Durell, he declared—“That having observed how confusions and strange errors sprang up in England, immediately after the bishops were removed, he had changed his mind. That being taught by experience, as the following day is teacher of the former, he had changed his opinion.” This accusation, which Salmasius here brings forward against the working of Presbyterian parity, is most emphatically confirmed by the Presbyterian EDWARDS in his *Gangrena*, dedicated to the Fanatical Parliament in 1646. “In these four last years, we have surpassed the deeds of the prelates, and justified the bishops, in whose time never so many nor so great errors were heard of, much less such blasphemies and confusions. We have worse things among us than ever were in all the bishops’ days; more corrupt doctrines, and unheard-of practices, than in 80 years before. The bishops and their chaplains (who were accounted time-servers) opposed the errors of the times, but the presbyters suffered all kinds of errors and schisms to come in when they were in place: *certainly the bishops and chaplains shall rise up in judgment against the ministry of this generation.*”

We shall now quote the sentiments of our Scottish Reformers on the subject of Episcopacy.—So far as those sentiments have been handed down to us, they distinctly appear to have favoured it. The indictment that was brought forward against Sir John Borthwick by Cardinal Beaton, contained all the usual charges; but in particular, that Sir John maintained “that the Church of Scotland ought to be governed after the manner of the Church of England,” and “that the English Liturgy was commendable, and ought to be embraced by all Christians.” Two of the most distinguished men who preached the doctrines of the Reformation in Scotland, a few years afterwards, were Rough and Knox, both of whom were priests of the Reformed Church of

\* Collier’s Eccl. Hist. vol. II. p. 718.



England. Rough very soon fled into England, to avoid persecution, and was presented to a living near Hull, by the Archbishop of York, and afterwards died a martyr during the reign of Mary of England. Being asked by Bonner what his judgment was of the Book of Common Prayer, he replied, "that he did approve the same, as agreeing in all points with the word of God." He was burnt in Smithfield on the 21st November 1567. \*

In the First Book of Discipline, drawn up by John Knox and others, in the year 1560, *three* distinct orders of ministers were established, viz. the superintendent, the minister, and the reader. To each of these orders of ministers, separate and distinct duties were assigned. Each superintendent had a considerable district, consisting of many parishes, allotted to his care, within which it was his office to ordain the clergy, and take a general cognisance of their lives, &c. The author of "The Fundamentall Charter of Presbytery," has enumerated no less than thirty marks of superiority in the Superintendent, over the parish minister. We may also consult the opinions of Spottiswood, and Erskine of Dun, who were two Superintendents. Spottiswood was a disciple of Cranmer, and was twenty years Superintendent of Lothian. "He lamented extremely," says his son, "the case of the Church in his last days, when he saw the ministers take such liberty as they did, and heard of the disorders raised in the Church through that confused *Parity*, which men laboured to introduce; for the *doctrine*, said he, which we profess is good, but the old *polity* was undoubtedly the better." Erskine, Superintendent of Angus, and the intimate friend of John Knox, addressed a letter to the Regent, dated "November 1571," in which he says, "Suâ be the kirk, spirituall offices be destributed, and men received and admitted thereto, and the administratione of the power is remitted be the kirk to bishopsis, or superintendentis, whairfore to the bishopsis and superintendentis pertenis the examinatione and admissione of men into beneficis, and offices of spirituall care, whatsoever benefice it be, alsweil bishopricks, abbeices, and priories, as other benefices. That this pertenis, be the Scriptoris of God, to the bishopsis or superintendentis, is manifest; for the Apostle Paul wrytes in the 2d Timothie, 2d chap. 11th verse, 'These things that thou hes hard of me, mony bering witnes, the same delivre to faythful men which sal be able to teach otheris.' Thus the Apostle refers the examinatione to Timothie, of the qualitie and abelitie of the person, whar he says to men able to teach uthers, and also the admissione he referis, whar he bids him deliver to him the same that is able to teach otheris. And in the uther place, 1 Tim. 5th Chap. 22d verse, 'Lay hands on no man suddenlie, nether be partacher of uther men's sinnis.' Be 'laying on of handis,' is understoode admissione to spirituall offices, the which the Apostle will not that Timothie doe suddenly, without just examinatione of their manneris and doctryne. The Apostle also writing to Titus, Bishop of Crete, puttis him in remembrance of his office, which was to admitt and appoint ministeris in every citie and congregation: and that they sud not doe the same rashlie without examination, he expressed the qualities and conditions of all men as sud be admitted, as at length is contained in the first chapter of the epistle foirsaid. The deacons that were chosen at Jerusalem be the whol congregation, were received and admitted be the apostles, and that be the

\* See Spottiswood's History.



laying on of their handis, as St Luke wrytes in the 7th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Thus we have expressed plainly be Scriptoris, that to the office of a bishop pertenis examinatione and admisione into spirituall cure and office, and also to oversee them that are admitted, that they walk uprightlie, and exercise their office faithfullie and purely ; to tak this power fra the bischope or superintendent, is to tak away the office of a bischope, *that no bischope be in the Kirk.*" \*

We have now shewn from the New Testament, the writings of the Primitive Church, and the practice of the Church Catholic, that Episcopacy is an apostolic institution, and that it was considered as such by the whole of Christendom in the purest ages of Christianity. We have also shewn, that whatever causes might have influenced the Reformers of the sixteenth century, in their original separation from the Church of Rome, a perfect unanimity prevailed amongst them, in favour of the apostolic claims of Episcopacy ; an unanimity which was afterwards unfortunately dissolved, by the very untoward circumstances in which some of their disciples were placed, and the persecutions to which they were exposed ; for they afterwards attempted to justify on principle, that which they had at first adopted from necessity.

But such is the love of change and separation now-a-days, and so strong a desire exists in many people, to make the Almighty think along with themselves, that they frequently refuse to take the apostolic claims of Episcopacy into consideration ; and if at any time they do condescend so far as apparently to resign their claims to infallibility, the manner in which they entertain the subject, shews too plainly the spirit by which they are actuated. Without considering for a single moment, the weakness of the arguments by which their own sentiments are supported, they hesitate not to reject the evidence for Episcopacy, on the plea that that evidence does not amount to an absolute *demonstration*. Bishop Butler says, " In questions of difficulty, or such as are thought so, where more satisfactory evidence cannot be had, or is not seen ; if the result of examination be, that there appears upon the whole any the lowest presumption on one side, and none on the other, or a greater presumption on one side, though in the lowest degree greater ; this determines the question even in matters of speculation ; and in matters of practice will lay us under an absolute and formal obligation, in point of prudence, and of interest, to act upon that presumption, or low probability, though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt which is the truth. For surely a man is as really bound in prudence to do, what upon the whole appears, according to the best of his judgment, to be for his happiness, as what he certainly knows to be so."† Upon this secondary ground alone, then, we feel ourselves called on to be the advocates of Episcopacy ; for if the evidence of its apostolic institution, does not amount to a demonstration to *all minds*, it, at all events, furnishes such a high presumption, as will induce every ingenuous person to act upon it, and that, too, promptly. Before this presumption can be overthrown, it will be necessary to prove from the New Testament, that the apostles communicated to every Presbyter whom they ordained, the power of ordaining others ; that the Epistles of Paul to Timothy, and Titus, are mere forgeries, and that the Angels of the seven Churches of Asia were

\* Bannatyne's Journal, p. 279, cited in Scottish Epis. Mag. 26.

† Introduction to Analogy of Religion, p. 2.

not individuals, but so many colleges of Presbyters. They must farther prove, that the whole of the primitive Churches changed their system of ecclesiastical polity in one day, without the slightest communication taking place between them, and without being at all aware of the change themselves. When they have proved all this, by the one hundredth part of the evidence which we have produced for the apostolic origin of Episcopacy, we pledge ourselves to recant our opinion, that Episcopacy is of Divine Right. But this they never can do; and if they would only consider the matter with impartiality, they would find that their inability for such ingenious championship is a most fortunate thing; for the consequence of their success would simply be this;—they would prove that the whole of the primitive Church, was governed by men who were totally unacquainted with the system of government instituted by the apostles; and they would thus realize the worst arguments of the Infidel, by establishing the ignorance of the primitive Christians upon a subject of such importance.

We are here advocating the cause of that polity, under which Christianity gained so complete a victory over the Pagan religions of the earth, and which was considered an apostolic institution, by the glorious army of martyrs and confessors,—and afterwards by Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Beza, Bucer, Grotius, Blondell, and indeed by all the great Reformers of the sixteenth century,—that same polity, under which the Church of England, the glorious bulwark of the Reformation, has in modern times so successfully opposed the errors of Popery and Fanaticism, and the damnable heresy of Socinianism,—that polity, among whose adherents are to be found the illustrious names of Cranmer, Jewel, Latimer, Ridley, Hooker, Taylor, Hammond, Chillingworth, Pearson, Barrow, Sage, Bull, Sherlock, Butler, Skinner, Horsley, and Mant, and a thousand others, who have in an eminent degree supported the orthodoxy of our religion, the splendour of our literature, and the glory of our country. And what is the polity against which we are contending?—a system which John Calvin and his contemporaries acknowledge to be merely human, and the creature of absolute necessity,—and whose followers the same John Calvin loaded with anathemas, if they rejected a hierarchy which would submit itself unto Christ,—a system which has paved the way for Socinianism, wherever it has been established. The circumstances which Calvin pleaded for his conduct, are not applicable to any British Protestants of the present day; for even in Scotland, where Episcopacy is not established by Law, a hierarchy have all along existed, whose lives and doctrine are free from reproach, and who have shewn by their meekness and magnanimity of conduct, in the long night of adversity through which they have passed, that they will “submit themselves to none but Christ.” What then would the shade of Calvin say, could it once more re-animate its earthly frame, and appear upon this fleeting scene, when it would see *Presbyterian parity*, almost the distinguishing mark of those who bear the name of *Calvinist*? Would it not say to them, “Why bear ye the name of the man who has anathematized your conduct? Are ye ignorant, that when Luther and I, and other reformers of our day, burst asunder the fetters with which the *Papacy* had enslaved us, and discarded all the vile inventions of Popery and Superstition, we never once dared to think of interfering with the sacred hierarchy of the Church, *which proceeded from God and was*



*instituted by God ? Do not then connect my name with your schismatical conduct."*

Having now shewn that Episcopacy is an apostolic institution, and was considered as such by the whole Christian world, until a change of Polity was introduced, *on the plea of necessity*, in the course of the sixteenth century, it remains to be stated, how impious it must be, for any man or any body of men, wilfully to resist the ordinance of God, and assume the sacred office of the priesthood to themselves, *without being duly called*. Under the Jewish Dispensation, we have several examples of such impiety, and the consequences of it exhibited to us in all their awful reality, by immediate interpositions of the divine vengeance ; and although, in consequence of the Almighty's pleasure, we see no miraculous visitations from heaven, upon those who usurp the sacred office of the priesthood in the Christian Church, we are not entitled on this account to imagine, that such a crime is less heinous now, than it was of old ; and accordingly we have frequent proofs afforded to us in history, of the disastrous consequences which have been permitted by God to accompany such an usurpation.

It is impossible to read the history of the Sectaries since the time of the Reformation, without observing the hardness of heart, which has been permitted to preserve its sway over them. Having heaped to themselves false teachers, their understandings have been darkened, and the true light has been hid from their eyes. So lamentable was the state of religion in England during their ascendancy, that we have the authority of the Presbyterian Edwards for saying, that such blasphemies and confusions had not been known in England for eighty years before. Heresies of every kind arose, and the indignation of God was so conspicuous, even to the unlettered minds of the populace, that in a very few years they rushed to the shore, and received the royal martyr's son upon their bended knees. We might mention several other instances of national delusion, in which the usurpation of the priesthood was accompanied by equally lamentable consequences ; but we would rather request attention to the following religious societies, as living proofs of the visitation of God, on those who have neglected to preserve a pure and apostolic Episcopacy.

In the Church of Rome an Episcopacy certainly does exist ; but if we consider how greatly its powers and faculties are impaired by the Popish Discipline, we may hold it as almost virtually abandoned. In the primitive Church, the Christian Bishops all made their vows to God ; but ever since the Popish Supremacy arose, the bishops in communion with Rome have been obliged to swear obedience *to their Lord the Pope* ; and thus in the Church of Rome, the Episcopal office, though duly constituted, exists merely as a name without the authority. In Germany, and at Geneva, where Episcopacy has been abolished in name as well as in substance, that heresy exists which is foretold by St Peter, in his Second General Epistle : " But there were false prophets also among the people, as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, *even denying the Lord that bought them*, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." Socinian principles are also very prevalent among the Protestant Sectarians of France, the Low-Countries, England, Ireland, and the United States of America. In England particularly, it is an extraordinary circumstance, that out of about 260 Presbyterian



congregations, 230 have of late years lapsed into Socinianism. We may also mention the Society of Quakers, who have dispensed with the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as superfluous ceremonies, thus abandoning the instituted means of grace to gratify their own vain wisdom.

It was by the energetic and inflexible conduct of the primitive bishops, that Christianity was so widely propagated in the earliest ages of the Church; and it was with their blood, that the holy edifice was consolidated. Such being the case, we trust that the time is nearly gone by, when Sectarians, feeling all the weakness of a desperate cause, will have the foolishness to assert that Episcopacy, in its origin, was the creature of worldly ambition; nor let them only read the history of those times, and they will discover, that the Episcopal pre-eminence was the sure road to the torture of the rack, and the horrors of an ignominious death; and it is not to be readily supposed, that human ambition would call into existence a pre-eminence of office, clothed with such unworldly prerogatives. However much therefore the Episcopal Church, *which is not infallible*, may have afterwards been polluted by popish inventions, it is quite clear, that as soon as the pollution is removed, it must remain the same apostolic Church which it was previous to its pollution, in the same way as pure water may become muddy during its course over a dirty soil, but it becomes the same pure water again, when it has once undergone the simple process of filtering.

Since the time of the Reformation, the Church of England, which has justly been termed the bulwark of the Protestant Faith, has, without any intermission, sent forth in every age an army of Christian heroes, who have secured for Christianity, the unfeigned respect of human philosophy; under their mighty weapons, *intellectual* infidelity has been fairly crushed, and scepticism is no longer to be found, except among those whom immorality and vice teach to be ignorant. That glorious Church has, with her Sisters and Daughters, the Reformed Episcopal Churches throughout the world, preserved the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, and has, by a form of sound words, afforded ample protection to her children against superstition, on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other. She has exerted her influence, in strangling every heresy at its birth, and laughed to scorn the derision of her assailants; and at this moment, when immorality and crime are abounding in the land, because men will not listen to her precepts, but follow after their own gods, she is recruiting her strength, and looking forward with the pensive triumph of a mighty conqueror, to a time of trial and humiliation, when the energy of her sons may once more erect for them imperishable monuments, as the champions of Christianity. She anticipates those times with a meek, but determined aspect; she trusts entirely to the assistance of God, who has promised to be with his Church, even unto the end of the world; and with this reliance on Divine protection, she is buckling on her armour, and will go forth to the battle-field, conquering and to conquer.

FINIS.